HE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS LETTER

VOLUME IX
NUMBER 4

FALL, 1961

HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

A MEMORY AND A PRAYER

Rev. Arthur H. Bradford, D.D.

Looking forward to Forefathers' Day, this year, I recall a memory and offer a prayer. In doing this, I am mindful of our Congregational Christian Churches, the United Church, our Historical Society; and the Unknown which lies before us all.

The memory is personal. It is of a day in October, 1945, when I was one of a small group of Congregational ministers who, at the invitation of our British brethren, were on a visit to England, Scotland, and Wales, to learn how their churches had fared during World War II.

Landing at Southampton, on that October day, we were graciously welcomed by the minister of the Above Bar Congregational Church, and one of his laymen who was Chief Constable of the city. They took us to the place where their church had stood before it was utterly destroyed by bombs, at night, early in the War. That was the church where Isaac Watts had worshipped, two centuries ago. They told us how they and a few other people of the church gathered there, in the rain, early in the morning, after the night of bombing; how they sang Watts' hymn:

> " O God, our help in ages past,
> Our hope for years to come,
> Our shelter from the stormy blast,
> And our eternal home."

As I recall this memory now, in early September, 1961, I am wondering what will happen in our world in the weeks ahead; before November, and Forefathers' Day. Possibly the war clouds will disappear. Possibly not. In any case we shall be facing the vast Unknown, whose mystery surrounds us, always. And we shall be needing the mighty music of our Faith, as our fathers did, and as our children will.

My prayer for our churches, their ministers and people, our United Church, and our Historical Society, is that all of us may learn anew to sing our Faith and to carry the power of its soul-lifting music into the life of all the world.

> " O God, beneath Thy guiding hand
> Our exiled fathers crossed the sea;
> And when they trod the wintry strand,
> With prayer and psalm they worshipped Thee."

With prayer and *psalm!* So may it be with us! A singing Faith, through Christ our Lord! Amen.

(Dr. Bradford as the first President of the Society served from 1952 to 1959.)

THE FOREFATHERS ON BROADWAY

In 1917 The Pilgrim Press published a volume of Forefathers' Day sermons by Charles E. Jefferson, distinguished minister of Broadway Tabernacle (Broadway church) in New York City where he had a "run" of thirty-one years on Broadway, beginning in 1898. The fifteen sermons in the book cover the years from 1901-1916, with the exception of 1912. In his sermon "The Place of the Puritan in History" Dr. Jefferson began thus: "Every year at this season of December I try to help you hear a voice out of the past." (Rev 1: 10) Other sermons include "The Puritan and the Home", "The Contribution of Congregationalism to Education", and "The Puritan Sabbath and Ours." In the first sermon in the book entitled "The Cloud and the Sea" (1 Cor. 10: 1) are these words: "Our fathers were all under the cloud, the cloud of divine guidance and protection, and also under the cloud of popular suspicion and disapprobation."

"K" IS TO BE KEPT

The 109th Anniversary Report of the Presbyterian Historical Society brings in addition a September News Letter, from which the following item is taken:

"I know of no place in which to deposit such a relic so proper as the Presbyterian Historical Society." So wrote Rev. R. K. Rodgers over 100 years ago as he was forwarding to the Society the original sermon William Mackey Tennent delivered before the General Assembly in 1798.

At the top of Tennent's sermon was the letter "K." According to a postscript on Rodgers' letter, this meant that the sermon was to be "Kept." Although 163 years have passed since Tennent placed the "K" on the top of the letter, the sermon was kept and remains today in excellent condition in the Society's archives.

May we keep the records of your church for the next 163 years?

A FELLOW HISTORIAN

Congratulations are extended to Rev. Harry W. Johnson, well known leader in Boise, Idaho, on his recent appointment as historian for the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. We welcome him as a fellow historian serving the churches in an important capacity, and pledge cooperation.

A CHECK LIST FOR CHURCH HISTORIANS

A copy of this comprehensive and suggestive check list, of great value to historians making an inventory of their records, may be had by writing the Society.

THE CHRISTIAN'S INTEREST IN HISTORY

In the current Spring Literary Issue of the Register of the Chicago Theological Seminary is a provocative article on the above topic by a recent addition to the CTS faculty in the person of the distinguished historian, Dr. John T. McNeill. Certain statements have especial significance in connection with the observance of Forefathers' Sunday.

"The past is the measureless receptacle of human experience."

"Strictly speaking, history does not teach. Men teach by using the data of history."

"One of our chief weaknesses lies in the fact that we are too little aware of the degree in which progress in the future depends on appreciation of the past. We need to bestir ourselves to recover the treasure of our Christian heritage, to make it known, and to secure its impact upon generations to come. The times are not propitious for this, and the task is great. But it is characteristic of Christianity that it has many times shown the power to recover from menacing ills and to meet the challenge of unfavorable times."

PILGRIM-PURITAN CHURCH RECORDS

In connection with his Th.D. Thesis at Harvard Divinity School, Rev. Harold F. Worthley has been engaged for several years in studying the extant records of all Congregational churches founded in Massachusetts before 1805. This research should result in a comprehensive catalogue of some four hundred and fifty churches. A sample of this research appears in the October Bulletin of the Congregational Library. The article makes generous reference to the work of our Society. Mr. Worthley is the minister of Linden Congregational Church in Malden, Massachusetts.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING

In agreement with the vote of the General Council at New Haven, June 30, 1954, and according to custom, we set aside Sunday, November 19th, as a time to gather together in thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God for our spiritual heritage. In the spirit of the Founding Fathers let us bravely face new occasions and new duties.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY $10,000 BUDGET

We are nearing the goal. Prompt response to this final appeal means victory. There are few "neglecters" among our friends.

HESE WE SALUTE

Rev. Ben M. Herbster, Norwood, Ohio, Presi-nt, United Church of Christ.

Judge Donald W. Webber, Auburn, Maine, oderator, United Church of Christ.

Mrs. George F. Kahlenberg, Two Rivers, Wis-nsin, Moderator, General Council of Congre-tional Christian Churches.

IGHTY YEARS IN DAKOTA

The growth of the Northern Dakota Territory gan with the extension of the Northern Pacific ilroad west from Fargo in 1872.

The next nine years were characterized by nited and abortive efforts to establish Congre-tional churches. In 1881, the first permanent ongregational church was founded at Wahpe-n. In the same year, churches were organized Fargo, Mayville, and Valley City. Also, the st Congregational Council was held, over a loon in Fargo, with Superintendent Mont-mery of Minnesota as moderator. In 1882 the eneral Association of North Dakota and East-n Montana was organized, with the Rev. Henry mmons as General Missionary.

The next decade was a period of rapid expan-on which saw sixty-eight churches established. ne greatest growth in number of churches took ace during the superintendancy of the Rev. lwin Stickney, the apex being 1916 with 242 urches. Many adverse factors made retreat cessary and in the thirties over eighty churches re closed. This trend has continued because a declining rural population. Today there are nety-five active churches, thirty-five with less an fifty members.

In typical Congregational fashion, two educa-nal institutions were established, Fargo Col-ge in 1887 and New Rockford Collegiate In-tute in 1904. However, financial difficulties cessitated the closing of both, the assets of rgo College going to Yankton College in uth Dakota.

Under the leadership of Superintendent gustus Hacke and others devoted to youth, in 34 the Conference purchased a tract of land the shore of Lake Metigoshe. The years since ve seen the primeval forest develop into a endid conference ground while preserving ch of its original atmosphere.

In 1945, the North Dakota Conference voted become self-supporting. This step, which at time took considerable courage, has become act.

In 1961, the Conference voted to become an ing conference of the United Church of rist and looks forward to consolidating its rk with that of the Evangelical and Reformed urch. Fifty years ago the Conference was re-anized.

REV. LESTER L. SOBERG,
Conference Associate Minister

"NEGLECTERS"

In the published minutes of the eighth annual meeting of the General Conference of the Congregational churches in Massachusetts in 1867, there is an interesting statistical report revealing the state of religion in a group of churches. Here are the facts about a single church. Parish population 450; congregation 340, being 76 percent of the population; communicants 73, being 16 percent of the population and 22 percent of the congregation. There are also figures for church attendance, the number of children between 5 and 15, the number religiously taught, and those not so taught; the number of children of church members, and those baptized and non-baptized. Finally the household baptisms are listed. The list known as "neglectors" (a suggestive title!) in this particular church both those nominally in the congregation and those wholly unconnected totaled 25 percent of the town population and 30 percent of the congregation.

ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMS RECEIVED

Thus far this year 53 programs have been received, ranging from the 50th to the 325th anniversaries of celebrating churches, from New England to Montana and California on the West, to Georgia and Florida in the South. Other states represented are Minnesota, Ohio, Tennessee, Nebraska, South and North Dakota, New York, Illinois, Vermont, Michigan, Iowa. These histories are kept in constant circulation among churches seeking aid in planning anniversaries. Lack of space does not permit of more specific comment on this important matter.

A COLONIAL ORDER OF WORSHIP

Drumming to Worship — Some churches used conch shells, when they had no bell.

Entrance of Minister — The people arose.

Opening Prayer — Not read.

Singing of a Psalm — Bay Psalm Book published in 1640.

Reading and Exposition of the Scriptures — With comment.

The Singing of a Psalm.

The Pastoral Prayer — No amens.

The Bringing of the Offering — The people would file past the Deacon's pew below the high pulpit and place their offering in a "box of wood."

The Sermon — An hour or so long.

The Singing of a Hymn — Lined out often.

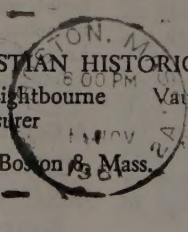
Concluding Prayer and Benediction — The people stood as the minister departed.

WESTERN FOUNDING FATHERS

During the past century seventeen of our fifty states have been admitted to the Union. In all of these states save two, Congregational churches had been planted prior to admission. In Nevada, the first church was formed seven years after admission, in Alaska, we have no church. On Forefathers' Sunday we call to mind the continental aspect of Congregationalism, and honor the pioneers who laid spiritual foundations for the new society to rise on the prairies, in the mountains, and by the Pacific. Herewith is a list of the seventeen states with their first churches.

State	*Admission*	*Church*	
Arizona	1912	Prescott	1880
Colorado	1876	Boulder and Denver, 1st Plymouth	1864
Idaho	1890	Pocatello	1889
Kansas	1861	Lawrence	1854
Montana	1889	Billings, 1st	1882
Nebraska	1867	Omaha, 1st	1856
Nevada	1864	Reno	1871
New Mexico	1912	Albuquerque, 1st	1880
North Dakota	1889	Fargo, 1st, Mayville, Valley City	1881
Oklahoma	1907	Oklahoma City	1889
South Dakota	1889	Yankton	1868
Utah	1896	Salt Lake City, 1st	1874
Washington	1889	Walla Walla, 1st	1865
West Virginia	1863	High View, Timber Ridge	1812
Wyoming	1890	Cheyenne	1869
Hawaii	1959	Honolulu, Kawaiahao	1819
Alaska	1959		

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
James F. English, *President* — James H. Lightbourne, Treasurer — Vaughan Dabney, Secretary
14 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Mass.



Mr. Stillson Judah
Pacific School of Religion
1798 Scenic Avenue
Berkeley, Calif.